United Nations

Report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

General Assembly

Official Records • Fiftieth Session
Supplement No. 46 (A/50/46)

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NOTE

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1. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation 1/ held its forty-fourth session at the Vienna International Centre from 12 to 16 June 1995. Mr. L. Pinillos Ashton (Peru), Mr. A. Kaul (Germany) and Mr. G. Bengtsson (Sweden) served as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively.

2. The Committee took note of General Assembly resolution 49/32 of 9 December 1994, by which, inter alia, the Assembly endorsed the plans of the Scientific Committee for future activities and requested the Committee to continue the review of important problems in the field of radiation and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fiftieth session.

3. In technical discussions, the Committee considered recent information on sources of radiation, exposures and their effects. The deliberations focused on review of documents prepared by the Secretariat on subjects that the Committee had selected as the most important topics for further study. Those included: sources of exposures, dose assessment for radionuclides, effects of radiation on the environment, DNA repair and mutagenesis, hereditary effects of radiation, epidemiological evaluation of radiation-induced cancer, combined effects of radiation and other agents, and Chernobyl: local doses and effects. The Committee made suggestions for the further development of these topics, in particular pointing out new and additional information to be considered.

4. The Committee discussed its intentions to continue to collect data on radiation exposures in countries world wide in order to determine representative values and ranges of variations. New information from radiobiological and epidemiological studies will be reviewed, which should improve understanding of the effects of radiation and the underlying risks. The Committee is aware that much information is becoming available on the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, and the Committee intends to review critically all available information, in particular to clarify the possible relationships of childhood thyroid cancers to radiation exposures in Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

5. During the 40 years of work of the Committee, considerable knowledge has been acquired of radiation sources and of the inevitable and circumstantial exposures that are a part of human life. An understanding of the underlying mechanisms of radiation interactions will improve the assessments of radiation risks. The Committee will continue to direct its efforts towards a broader understanding of ionizing radiation sources and effects.

6. The Committee expressed the hope that Member States of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency would continue to assist in this work, especially by providing relevant information on the subjects of interest for the future programme of study, so that its deliberations may be based on the broadest and most up-to-date scientific and technical information.

7. The Committee decided to holds its forty-fifth session at the Vienna International Centre from 17 to 21 June 1996.

Notes

1/ The terms of reference of the Committee, which was established by the General Assembly at its tenth session in 1955, are set out in resolution 913 (X) of 3 December 1955. The Committee was originally composed of the following Member States: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, India, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America. By its resolution 3154 C (XXVIII) of 14 December 1973, the Assembly decided to increase the Committee's membership by up to five additional members, and the following Member States were appointed by the President of the Assembly in consultation with the Chairmen of the regional groups: Federal Republic of Germany, Indonesia, Peru, Poland and Sudan. By its resolution 41/62 B of 3 December 1986, the Assembly decided to increase the membership to a maximum of 21 members and invited China to become a member of the Committee. As of 24 December 1991, the Russian Federation continued the membership of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the United Nations and, accordingly, its membership in the Committee. Furthermore, by its decision 47/320, the General Assembly, on 19 January 1993, appointed Slovakia as a member of the Committee to fill the seat vacated by the former Czechoslovakia.